
Palmento Costanzo “Mofete” Etna DOC Bianco

Winery: Palmento Costanzo
Category: Wine – Still – White
Grape Variety: 80% Carricante, 20% Catarratto
Region: Etna/ Sicily/ Italy
Vineyard: Contrada Santo Spirito, Passopisciaro
Winery established: 2011
Feature: Organic



Product Information

Soil: Black, brownish volcanic sands and volcanic rocks. Rich in organic substances. Northern exposure.

Elevation: 700 meters (2,300 feet)

Age of Vines: 10 – 30 years

Plantation density: on average 7,000 vines/hectares

Vinification: Hand-harvest at the end of September. Soft pressing and fermentation in stainless steel tanks with indigenous yeast. Aged for 4 months in stainless steel tanks in contact with the fine lees and 2 months aged in the bottle.

Tasting Note: Medium straw yellow with a fragrant bouquet rich of citrus fruit and mineral notes, with hints of Mediterranean herbs. It is vibrant, fresh, and sapid on the palate.

Alc: 12%

Producer Information

A palmento is the traditional winemaking structure in Sicily. Regulations eventually led nearly all palmentos to be converted for other uses, such as for storage or restaurants, but since Palmento Costanzo is located within Mt Etna National Park, it remained untouched as a protected historical structure. Mimmo and Valeria are a Sicilian couple whose devotion to the traditions of Mt Etna led them, starting in 2011, to lovingly restore the palmento as a functioning winemaking structure once more.

The palmento is far from the only ancient treasure on this site, with vines that are up to 120 years old! Bush-trained in the “alberello” style, each piede franco vine is supported by the traditional chestnut poles. The vines are arranged in the quinconze system, the Italian word for the pattern seen in the dots on the five side of a die. A sensible geometry for fitting vines into a narrow mountain terrace, the arrangement also lets each vine see sun all day, without being shaded by its sisters. Close spacing--a meter and a bit apart--causes enough competition to send roots down deep into the cool, mineral-rich earth below. This training system also reflects the historic proportional grape blends; for instance, red grapes are arranged with four Nerello Mascalese plants surrounding a central Nerello Cappuccio.

Palmento Costanzo is on the north side of Mount Etna, near the town of Passopisciaro. The town’s name means “to walk the sciara,” referring to the rocky volcanic substance that makes up the winery’s structures as well as the vineyards’ dry stone terraces. A certain number of years after an eruption, yellow flowers called “ginestra” are the first signs of life that show it will be time to plant the vines. An inspiration for the color of one of their wine labels, the ginestra are also an excellent symbol for the spirit of rejuvenation endemic to Mt. Etna--and defined by Valeria & Mimmo’s labor of love.